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News Release

## **HALLOWEEN FOOD SAFETY TIPS**

Don't get tricked by unwanted bacteria that can make you sick. Avoid uninvited bugs that can ruin your party. Here are some food safety tips to help you have a Happy Halloween!

### **Tips for Parents before Trick-or-Treat**

- Children should not snack while out trick-or-treating. Give them a snack or light meal before going out;
- Tell children not to accept--and, especially, not to eat--anything that is *not commercially wrapped*.

### **Trick-or-Treating Food Safety Tips**

- Trick-or-treaters should wait until they get home and their parents can check their candy before they eat;
- Discard homemade treats;
- Inspect commercially wrapped treats for signs of tampering, such as an unusual appearance or discoloration, tiny pinholes, or tears in wrappers. Throw away anything that looks suspicious;
- Discard any goodies with open or torn wrapping.

### **Consider Alternative Treats to Give**

- Packages of low-fat crackers with cheese or peanut butter;
- Packaged fruit leather;
- Mini boxes of raisins;
- Packages of hot chocolate mix;
- Microwaveable popcorn.

### **What to Serve at a Halloween Party**

- If having food catered, make sure you are working with a reputable caterer and have properly working chafing dishes to keep hot food hot;
- Keep hot foods hot at a safe temperature of 140°F or above;

- Keep cold foods cold. Make sure there is plenty of room in your refrigerator to store cold food before, during and after the party. The refrigerator should be 40°F or cooler to prevent bacterial growth;
- If the refrigerator is too crowded, store and cool drinks in coolers with ice;
- If juice or cider is served to children at Halloween parties, make sure it is pasteurized or otherwise treated to destroy harmful bacteria. Juice or cider that has not been treated will say so on the label.

### **What Food to Bring to a Halloween Party**

- Keep cold food cold, and hot food hot;
- Choose simple dishes that can be put in a cooler filled with ice or frozen gel packages;
- Any foods that have been cooked ahead of time and need to be reheated like meatballs and chicken wings need to be heated to 165°F in a microwave oven;
- Fresh vegetables should be washed well before serving.

### **Further Information**

USDA Food Safety and Inspection Services  
[http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/index.asp)

US Food and Drug Administration  
<http://www.fda.gov/default.htm>

For more information about Food Safety, Preservation, or Preparation please contact Regional Extension Agent-Angela Treadaway at (205) 338-9416 or (205) 410-3696-cell or email [atreadaw@aces.edu](mailto:atreadaw@aces.edu).

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